

Phone policies, side hustles, rote learning and pride

YOU are the most important part of Teacher Tapp, and we want to continue saying “thank you” for making such a valuable contribution!

From the 1st to 29th February, for every 20 questions you answer on Teacher Tapp you'll receive a Golden Ticket for the Teacher Tapp Prize Draw. After 4pm on the 1st March, we'll draw a winner, announcing it in the app and on socials.

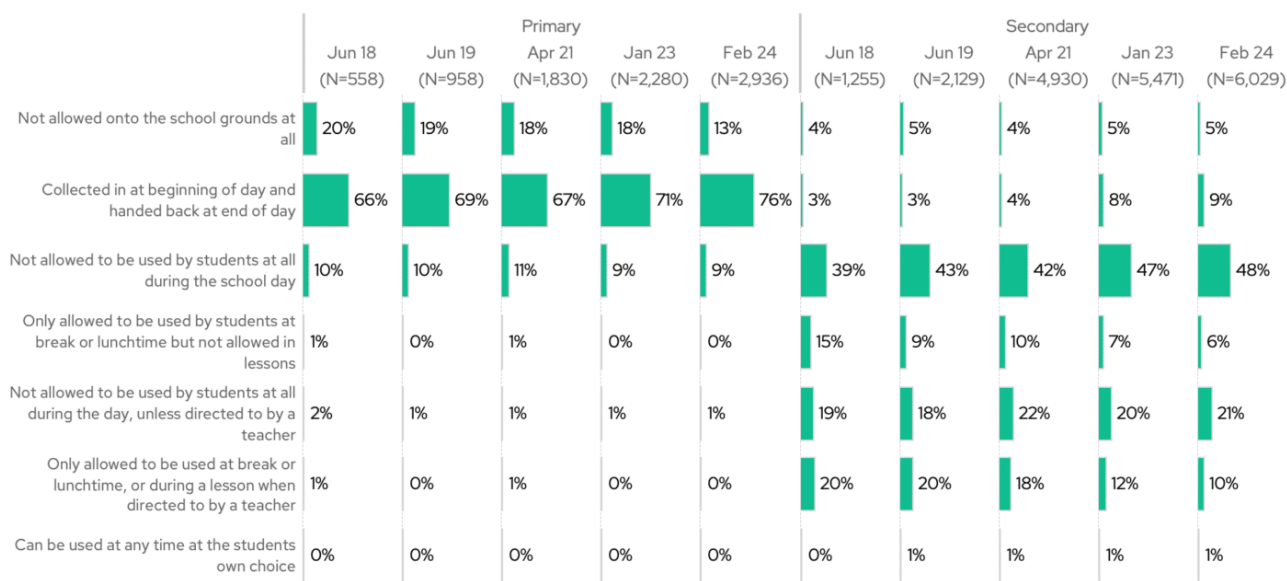
This month, you can win £1,000 cash! So you can win big by answering questions every day!

Phone policies

Restricting children's access to phones has been in the news again recently. Last week, we asked about school policies again. We now have six years' data on this, showing that:

- Phone use policies are pretty restrictive already. For example, 62% of secondary teachers report that their school has rules which mean teachers should never see phones. Almost no teachers (<1%) report policies which allow students to use phones whenever they like.
- Primary schools are becoming more accepting of phones. Which is to say, the proportion of primary teachers who report that phones are banned from school grounds has fallen (down 7% points since 2018). But the proportion collecting them at the start of the day and giving them back at the end has risen 10% points in the same period. This suggests primaries have accepted parents wanting their children to have phones on the way to and from school - but still don't want them used at school.
- Secondary schools are becoming more restrictive. The proportion of secondary school teachers who say phones are banned at all times of the school day has risen (from 39 to 48%) as has the proportion collecting them in (from 3 to 9%).

Which of the following most closely matches your school's policy on mobile phones for students?



Teacher responses vary from 558 to 6,029, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

[Addendum 27 March 2025: this article originally referred to the proportion of schools rather than the proportion of teachers. Whilst there is very little difference in our results between the two, here are the findings by school with the differences highlighted bold:

- Phone use policies are pretty restrictive already. For example, 63% of secondary schools have rules which mean teachers should never see phones. Almost no schools (<1%) have policies which allow students to use phones whenever they like.
- Primary schools are becoming more accepting of phones. Which is to say, the proportion of primaries banning schools from school grounds has fallen (down 6 percentage points since 2018). But the proportion collecting them at the start of the day and giving them back at the end has risen 11 percentage points in the same period. This suggests primaries have accepted parents wanting their children to have phones on the way to and from school – but still don't want them used at school.
- Secondary schools are becoming more restrictive. The proportion of schools banning their use at all times of the school day has risen (from 39% to 50%) as has the proportion collecting them in (from 3 to 9%).]

A policy isn't much use unless it's actually enforced. We have data here too, and it suggests that phones remain a problem in many schools. For example, when we asked 'Did a student take out a mobile phone in one of your lessons today without permission?' last year, one in five teachers said yes. One in twenty said their most recent lesson had been disrupted by a student using their mobile phone without permission. Perhaps what schools need isn't stronger policies – just better enforcement.

The power of rote learning

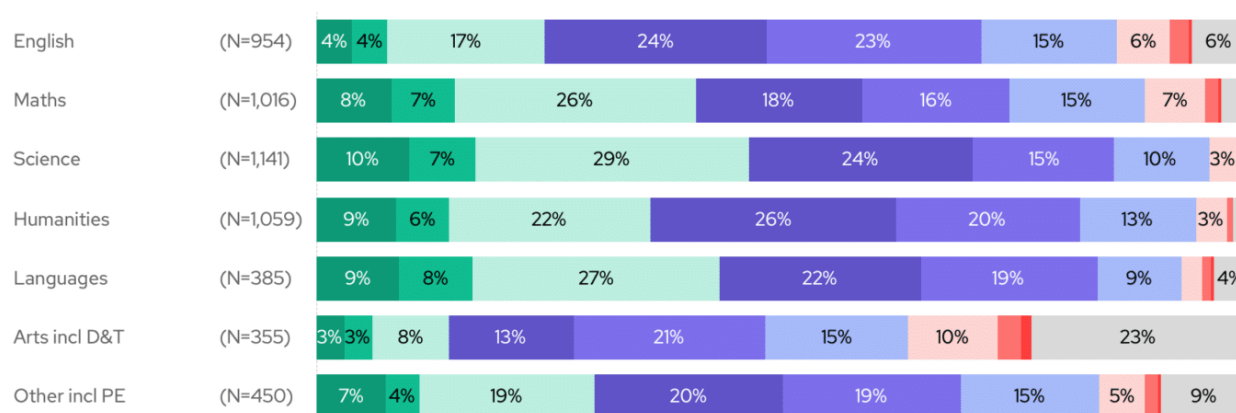
Last week, we asked secondary teachers the highest grade they thought a student could possibly get purely through rote learning. Answers varied substantially, from the 7% of

teachers who thought students could get a 9, to the 5% who thought they would get nothing.

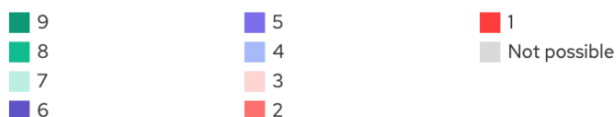
We were particularly interested in variation across subjects. Science teachers tended to think rote learning would be most effective: 10% thought you could get a 9, and 70% thought you could get a 6 or above. Arts teachers were most sceptical: just 3% thought you could get a 9, and 34% thought you could get a 6 or above. Mathematicians and linguists also thought you could do pretty well with rote learning; English teachers were among the sceptics.

Perhaps what's most surprising is how much variation there is between teachers of the same subject. For example, among English teachers, 4% thought students could get a 9, and 6% thought students wouldn't scrape a 1. How differently do these two groups teach? What exam board are they on?

What GCSE grade do you think it's possible to get in your subject *purely* through rote learning?



Question answered by 5,360 teachers on 31/01/2024 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



Side hustles

The last four Januarys, we've asked whether teachers have earned any money outside education in the preceding twelve months. From 2019 through to 2022, the proportion who had hovered at around 12%. This year, we saw a substantial jump, to 17%.

Teachers are more likely to be earning money outside education if they're men (20% are, as opposed to 16% of women). And the more senior you are, the less likely you are to be earning money outside education: 17% of classroom teachers and 18% of middle leaders have side hustles, but only 8% of headteachers do so - presumably the latter are either too well paid, or too busy, for side hustles.

Pride

Are you proud to tell others you're part of the school? Most teachers - 72% - say yes. But

which teachers are more likely to feel proud?

- Primary teachers feel prouder than secondary (74% primary; 70% secondary). We wondered whether bigger schools might feel pride in the work of a year team or department, rather than the whole school.
- Teachers in stand-alone academies are the proudest of their school, those in MATs least likely to be proud (stand-alone academies 79%; small MATs 67%; large MATs 70%).
- Teachers in outstanding schools are more likely to feel proud (there's clearly an overlap here with standalone academies!): outstanding 81%; RI/inadequate 56%.

Ups and Downs

On the rise

■■ Satisfaction with the hours you work: 51% of staff are moderately or very satisfied - the highest proportion we've seen since 2017, when we first asked.

Heading down

■■ Hostility to the phonics check: since we last asked, two years ago, the proportion of teachers saying it should be scrapped was down 9% points. Fifteen percent of teachers think it should be kept; 32% thinks it needs significant changes, the rest say they have no opinion on it.

Daily Reads

The most read article from the last week has been: [Counterproductive 'fun'](#)

And here are the rest for your reference:

- [Stop banging on](#)
- [Vulnerability](#)
- [The trouble with childhood](#)
- [On rote learning](#)
- [Important peculiarities of memory](#)